Afghanistan

It has long been said that history is written by the winners, but in order to fully understand events it is useful to consider all points of view. With this in mind the following assignments are designed to help students develop a perspective on the culture of Afghanistan.

1. As a journalist you have been posted to Afghanistan many times since your first trip in 1980. You have travelled with the Canadian Army and on your own, but family obligations in Canada mean that this is your last trip. Write an editorial for your newspaper describing the sights and sounds of Afghanistan and how it has changed over the years.
2. As an Imam you are respected as a thinker and leader in the community. You lead the prayers in the mosque, give sermons, marry people and perform other religious duties. One of your roles is to teach children about Islam and you have been asked to share a lesson with a class in the West. Prepare a lesson on one of the festivals listed below and present it in written form. Include information about the history and significance of the festival, the clothing worn, food, gifts, etc.

* Lailat-ul-Qadr
* Jum’a-tul-Mubarak
* Shab-I-Miraj
* Eid-ul-Fitr

1. The rights (and lack of rights) of women in Afghanistan has been the subject of a number of publications. Read the poem I remember you written by Dr. Zieba Shorisk-Shonley, and write an essay describing how a woman’s life would be different today if the Taliban had never taken over Afghanistan. Include a one paragraph biography of Dr. Shorisk-Shonley. A link to the poem is given on the same web page as this document.
2. Males in Afghanistan are expected to follow traditional roles and shoulder responsibility for the economic well-being of their family, including their aging parents. They are responsible for how the outside world views their family and their honor and pride are very important to them. This can conflict with the family’s social position which depends on the public behavior of its females. Kite Flying seems like an escape from this burden. Write an essay explaining the sport, the process involved in making a kite and the fighting that happens in competitions. Be sure to explain how the history of Kite flying mirrors the history of Afghanistan and its continued appeal.